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CULTURAL RESOURCES INVESTIGATION OF HOMME RESERVOIR

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WALSH COUNTY NORTH DAKOTA(U) ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD

SERVICES INC STILLWATER MN G J HUDAK 06 JUL 81

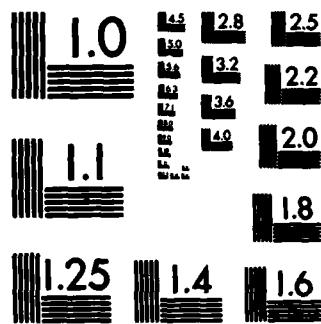
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CULTURAL RESOURCES INVESTIGATION OF  
HOMME RESERVOIR  
WALSH COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

POPULAR REPORT

Submitted To:

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
ST. PAUL DISTRICT

1135 U.S. Post Office & Custom House  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Contract No. DACW37-80-D-0045

Prime Contractor:

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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)  Homme Reservoir was constructed on the South Branch of the Park River, Walsh County, North Dakota in 1947 by the St. Paul District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.  Homme Dam, which contains the waters of the reservoir, is an earthenfill structure some 865 feet long and 67 feet high. A cultural resource literature search, records review, and reconnaissance level field investigation of lands adjacent to Homme Reservoir were conducted.		

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### Purpose and Description of the Investigation

Homme Reservoir was constructed on the South Branch of the Park River, Walsh County, North Dakota in 1947 by the St. Paul District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Located some four river miles west of the city of Park River, North Dakota, the reservoir provides flood control and reserve water to compensate for low water flows on the South Branch of the Park River.

Homme Dam, which contains the waters of the reservoir, is an earthen-fill structure some 865 feet long and 67 feet high. At the maximum pool elevation of 1,080 feet, the reservoir has 4.1 miles of shoreline and a surface area of 194 acres. At this level it is about 1.3 miles long and about 2,000 feet wide at its widest point. Figure 1 shows its general location.

As part of its obligation to protect the cultural resources of the nation, the St. Paul District authorized a cultural resources literature search, records review, and reconnaissance level field investigation of lands adjacent to Homme Reservoir. The Study Area identified by the Corps of Engineers is a six square mile area around the reservoir (Figures 2 and 3). This Study Area was the subject of the literature search and records review. Within the Study Area was the Field Survey Area (Figure 4), which was the object of a field reconnaissance.

To accomplish the literature search and records review, historians and architectural historians consulted published and unpublished reports, books, articles, manuscripts, and the files of the Division of Archeology and Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck. The work was conducted in the winter of 1980-81.

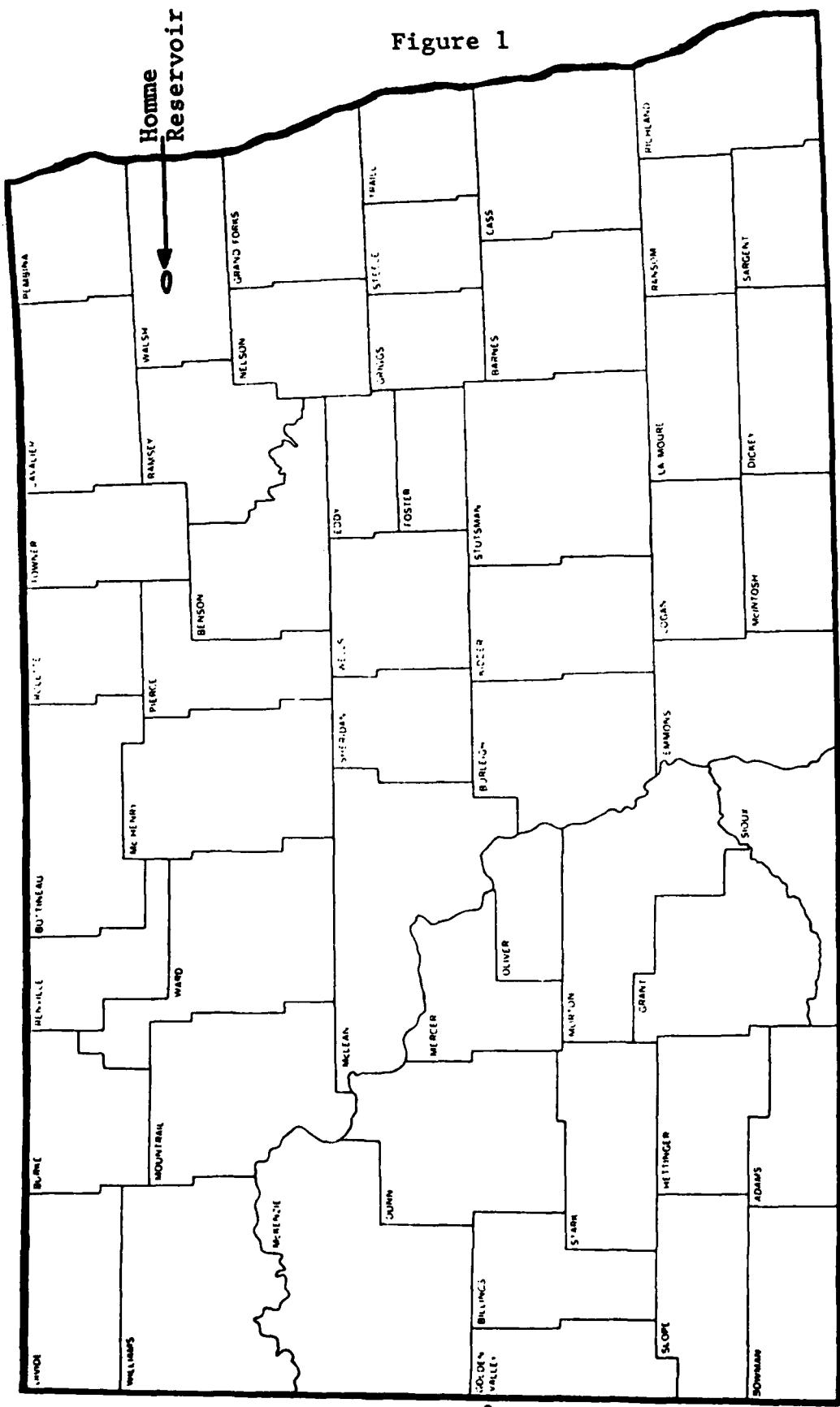
The field reconnaissance of the Field Survey Area was conducted by a field crew using standard field equipment and current professional techniques of visual observation, surface testing, and subsurface testing.

The literature search/records review identified three prehistoric and no historic sites in the Study Area. The field reconnaissance identified no prehistoric or historic sites in the Field Survey Area.

### Summary of Regional Prehistory and History

The first prehistoric peoples who could have used the Study Area were the Paleo-Indian "Big Game" (pre-7000 B.P.) peoples, who lived by following herds of giant bison. The Paleo-Indians left behind finely-made flaked and chipped stone projectile points which they used on the tips of spears, known as Clovis or Folsom points. They used stone knives, skin scrapers, and punches, and probably wore clothing made from animal skins. No Paleo-Indian finds have been made in the Study Area, but these peoples were ranging in the area east and west of the Red River of the North,

Figure 1



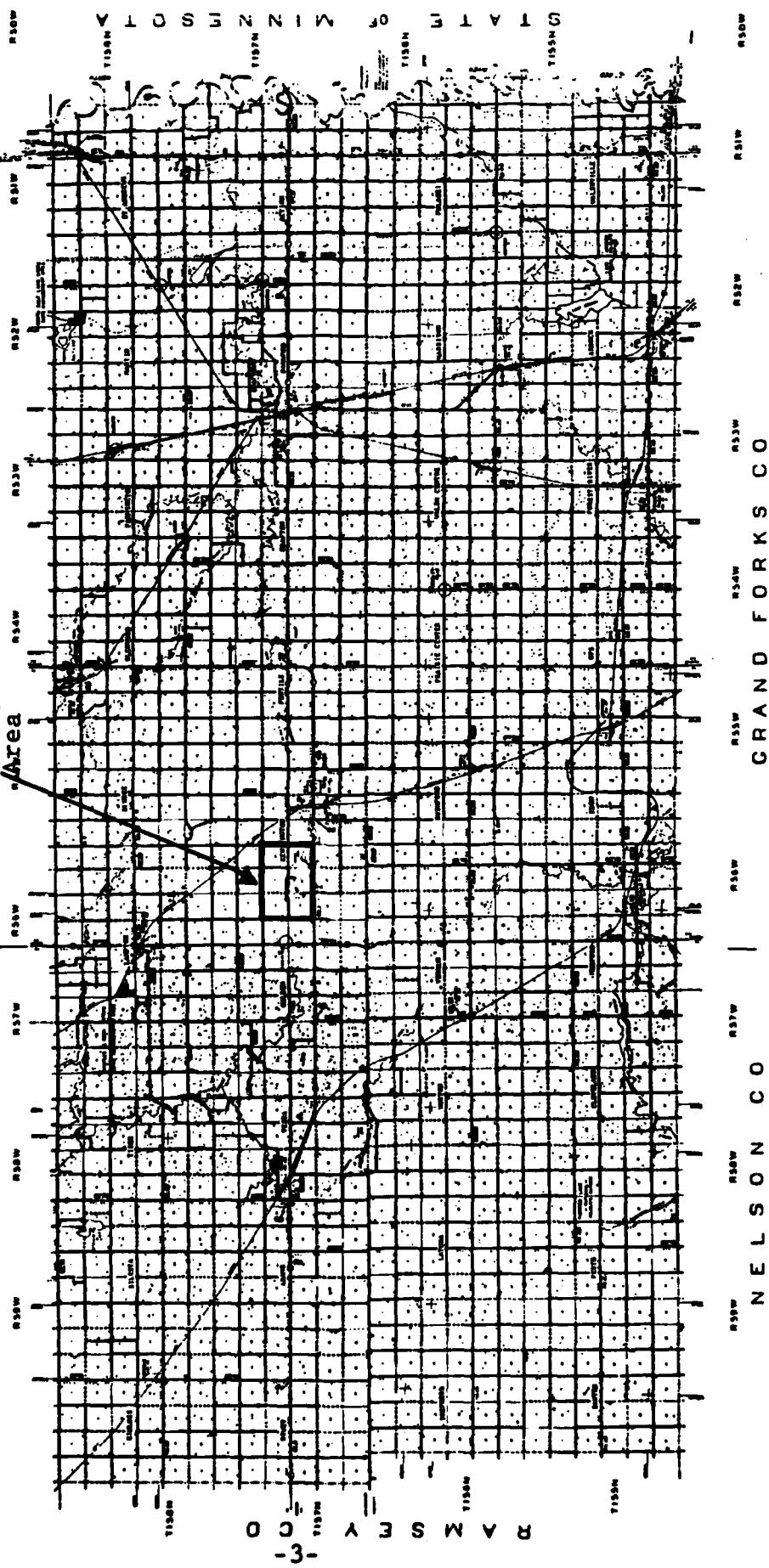
## Map of North Dakota Showing General Location of Study Area

# MARSH COUNTY NORTH DAKOTA



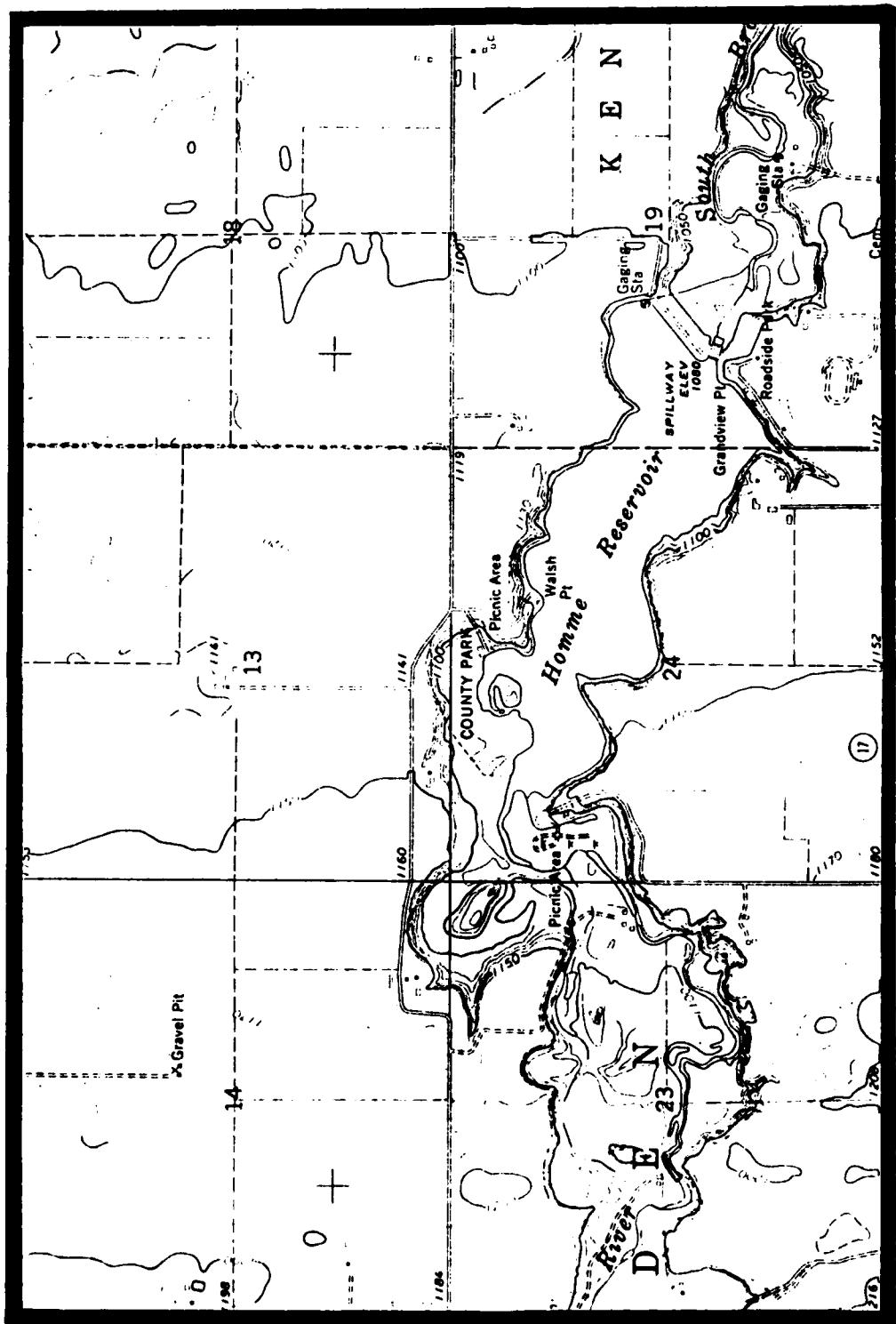
## Study PERIOD

Figure 2



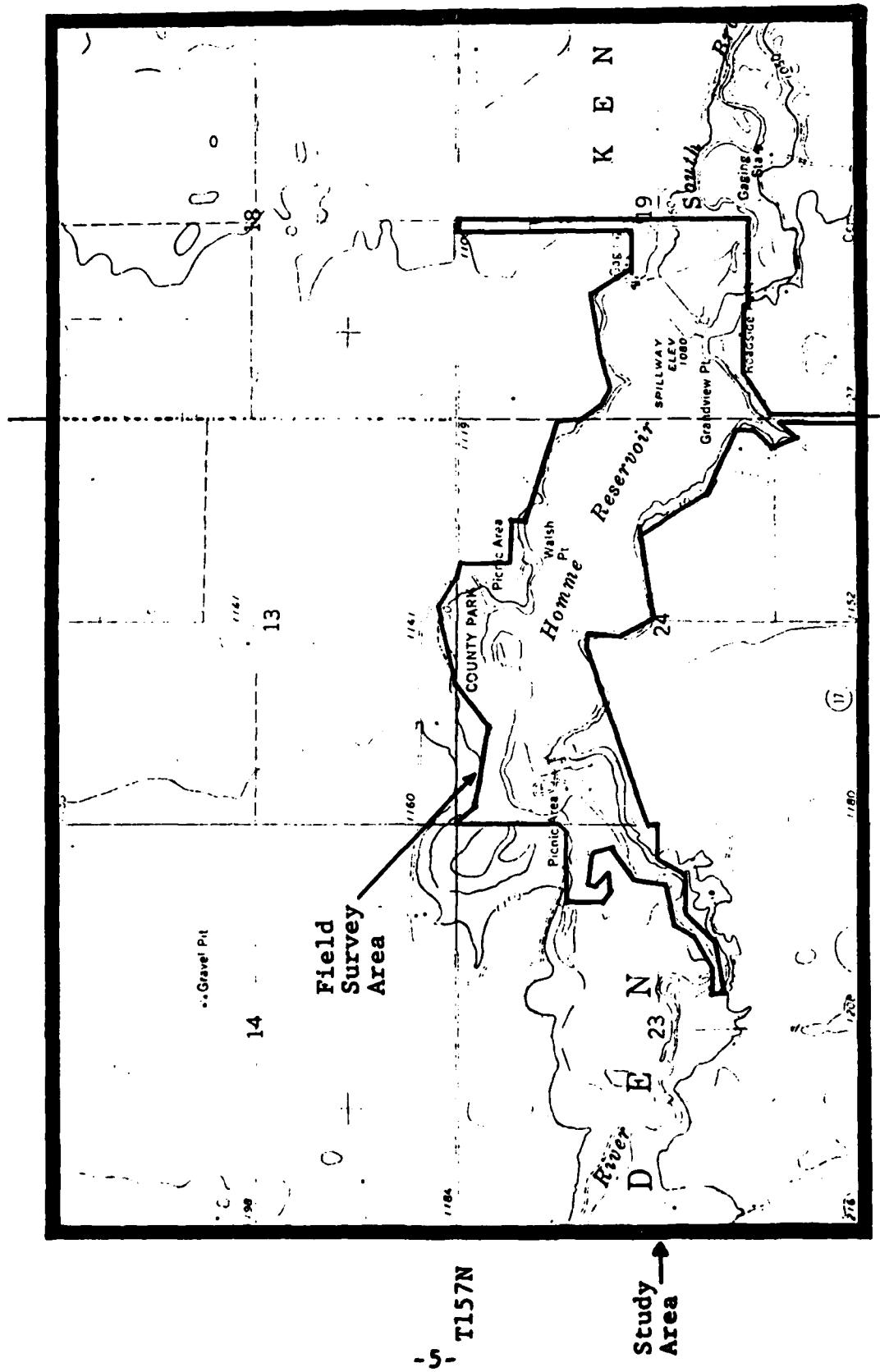
## Map of Walsh County, ND Showing Study Area

Figure 3



Map of Walsh County, ND Showing Study Area

Figure 4



## Map of Walsh County, ND Showing Study Area and Field Survey Area

and could have been at present-day Homme between 12,000 years ago, when Lake Agassiz no longer covered the area, and 7,000 years ago, when the Paleo-Indian culture gave way to the Plains Archaic.

The Plains Archaic culture was based on a hunting, gathering, fishing economy, which included the hunting of both large and small game and the gathering of some wild plants. These peoples ranged smaller territories than the Paleo-Indians, becoming more prone to use the same places to hunt, gather, or fish year after year depending on the season.

Archaeological evidence of the Archaic culture comes from scattered surface finds. Again, Plains Archaic sites are few in the northern Plains because so few archaeological investigations have been conducted. A skeleton which may date from around 4000 B.C. was found in Otter Tail County, Minnesota deeply buried in the bed of former glacial Lake Pelican. In Manitoba, Archaic sites date from around 3000-1500 B.C.

The Red River Valley lies on the western limit of one distinct late Archaic culture known as "Old Copper", which was centered in Wisconsin between 3000 B.C. and 1000 B.C. These peoples are known to have mined copper farther east in the region of Lake Superior, along Wisconsin's Brule River, on Isle Royale, and on the Keeweenaw Peninsula of Michigan. Relatively pure copper was fashioned directly into tanged points, wedges, crescent-shaped knives, and crescents. In the Red River Valley, Old Copper burials are found mostly on the Minnesota side of the river in the gravels and sands of ancient Lake Agassiz beaches. Such burials have not been found in the Homme Reservoir area. Very little is known about the lifeways of the Old Copper culture in the Red River Valley, because campsites and habitation sites have not been located there.

There is more archaeological evidence for the Woodland Period in the Upper Midwest and the northern Plains, although these cultures are not well defined in the region around the Study Area. Mound building was common to the Woodland culture, which lasted from about 1000 B.C. to 1700 A.D. Woodland peoples led a semi-sedentary way of life, and they introduced burial in earthen mounds and the making of pottery.

The best-known group of mound builders near the Study Area has been known since the 1930s as the Arvilla Burial Complex, after mounds excavated near Arvilla, Grand Forks County, North Dakota. Arvilla mounds are characterized by deep pits containing complete and disarticulated skeletons with grave goods of shell ornaments, bone, antler, and teeth and pottery elbow pipes overlain by linear or circular earthen mounds. They occur geographically on the Campbell Beach of former Lake Agassiz, which marks the penultimate state of the old glacial lake. It is unlikely that Arvilla mounds would be found within the Study Area because the lake bottom deposits there would not allow the same ease of excavation as the sand and gravel beaches.

The Blasky Mounds, or Fordville Mound Group, is a Woodland site southwest of the Study Area in Walsh County. This mound group has been described by one investigator as of the Mille Lacs Aspect (i.e. Late Woodland Dakota) of the Woodland culture.

Mound building was still practiced by early historic Indian tribes. In the Red River Valley region, later mound builders may have been ancestral to the historic Cheyenne and Blackfoot Indians. By 1800, however, the Cheyenne were located in the Black Hills of South Dakota, having been pushed southwest by the Sioux. By 1750, the Cree tribe was hunting in extreme northeastern North Dakota. In the mid-1600s, two Dakota (Sioux) tribes, the Yanktonai and Teton, moved from the woods of Minnesota onto the prairies of North Dakota. By 1850, the Tetons were established in the Missouri River region while the Yanktonai stayed in eastern North Dakota. These Dakota tribes were forced west by the Chippewa, who were pushed west by tribal movements further east that had been caused by the French, British, and Americans.

The Chippewa who moved west to inhabit northeastern North Dakota were forced to change from a woodland environment to a mixed, prairie/wooded valley (plains) environment. This transition was aided by the Cree, who were allies of the Chippewa, and like them, of Algonquian stock. The Chippewa picked up some of the new plains-oriented lifeways from the Cree, and in time came to be a distinct, Plains Chippewa, tribe.

Fur trading was begun in the Red River Valley by the 1670s and lasted into the mid-1800s. For almost 100 years the French controlled fur trading operations in the Valley, but the British became increasingly active there after 1797.

Old maps and written sources indicate that Alexander Henry the Younger, an Englishman, established a fur trading post for the North West Company at the confluence of the Red River and the Park River.

After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 and the War of 1812, the United States took control of the Red River Valley. The Red River trails were blazed by fur traders between Pembina on the lower Red River (at the present Canadian border) and the American Fur Company's warehouse at Mendota (at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers). These trails were used to supplement the undependable water route up the Red River to Lake Traverse and down the Minnesota River to Mendota. Between 1844 and 1870 many alternate routes and short cuts developed between Pembina and Mendota, two of which ran north-south just east and west of the Study Area.

With Euro-American settlement, which began in the 1870s, agriculture became the economic base of the Study Area. Over 80% of the land around Homme Reservoir is in crop and pasture.

The known cultural resources of the Study Area are not extensive, and the field reconnaissance for this study identified no new sites.

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